

SC069336

Registered provider: Prior's Court Foundation

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation. It provides care in 12 houses for up to 67 children with complex autism spectrum disorder. There is an Ofsted-registered school within the extensive grounds. The organisation is also registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide residential homes for adults on the same site. At the time of the inspection, 52 children were living in the home.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this site.

There are two registered managers for this home. The managers registered with Ofsted in May 2023.

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 May 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/05/2022	Full	Good
13/07/2021	Full	Good
25/06/2019	Full	Good
09/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children are understood and well cared for by staff, and relationships between staff and the children are positive. Staff patiently support children using communication aids successfully. Children can communicate their wishes and feelings to staff. Staff enthusiastically celebrate the children's individualities and value their achievements.

A multidisciplinary team of residential staff, therapists and nurses promote the children's health needs. The home has a desensitisation programme to help children access health and medical resources in the community. Staff take children to an on-site medical facility which includes a dentist's chair, a doctor's waiting room and medical room. This is highly effective, and children make considerable progress with their health needs. Some children can now access an external dentist and have received medical treatment.

The nursing team has worked with the NHS to carry out desensitisation research in audiology practices. The nurses received training in audiology and equipment was supplied to carry out this work. Nurses carry out initial audiology assessments and quickly refer children when concerns are identified. Without this, some children would not have had access to the services they need to support their health needs.

Children are developing their independence skills. They access a 24-hour education curriculum that is focused on developing their independence skills. Staff work closely between education and the home. Staff continually support the children's development of these skills. Staff use 'I can' statements to measure and set targets for the children to achieve.

Staff help children to spend quality time with their families. Children go home to spend time with their families. When this is not possible, family members can stay at the home and spend weekends with their child in designated living areas. Leaders have invited families to attend events such as a firework night. Families who attended enjoyed the event with their children.

Children benefit from the wide range of facilities available to them. Staff help children to access sensory rooms, a soft-play area, a small farm, a gym and large open spaces. Children's bedrooms are personalised to their individual needs. The homes are well equipped with games and toys. There is a dedicated maintenance team that responds to repairs needed in the home. Some areas of the homes show some wear and tear and need attention.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Systems in place to monitor safeguarding practices are excellent. Safeguarding concerns are overseen by a dedicated designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL

is responsive and effective when monitoring any safeguarding concerns. When safeguarding concerns are raised, these are well investigated and never looked at in isolation. This enables the DSL to identify patterns and trends promptly, which keeps children safe.

Senior leaders work well with other professionals. The local authority designated officer said that there is a transparent and open working relationship with them. There is good external oversight of care coordinated by senior managers, and regular review meetings take place with external professionals. At these meetings, recent incidents are reviewed and agreed changes are made to plans to support children. This leads to transparent care with shared accountability that provides greater safeguards for the children.

Staff do not use consequence systems to manage children's behaviours. Staff use positive reward systems and focus on the children having happy and enjoyable experiences. Physical interventions are used appropriately to keep children safe. All staff involved in physical interventions are required to record their account. A multidisciplinary team scrutinises these records and reviews practice. This ensures that support provided to children is safe and effective. Debriefs with children and staff do not consistently take place. This is a missed opportunity to capture the children's and staff's views.

Staff understand the risks for children. Each child has a detailed plan of care that includes risk assessments. Risk assessments are easily accessible to staff, who carry devices linked to the care records. Managers and the senior team review this information regularly.

Safer recruitment is generally well managed. The organisation has learned lessons from previous shortfalls with identification checks. They now have stringent checks in place to verify documents. Inspectors found that managers had not assessed information on one employee's reference to check that they are suitable. The managers addressed this during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Two very experienced and suitably qualified registered managers manage the homes. The managers work successfully together. This arrangement works due to their continuous communication and shared oversight of the homes. Both managers share the same vision for the home and have incredibly high aspirations. There is a clear ethos for the care provided which is woven through induction, training and care planning.

A highly experienced responsible individual supports the registered managers. Together with the skills and experience of a head of care and DSL, these managers form an effective and consistent senior management team.

Managers use impressive systems to monitor the children's progress. Managers are striving for the best quality of care possible for the children. Managers at all levels

know the children well and have a firm grasp of the progress they are making. Managers are extremely proud of the progress children make.

Managers are committed to improving the services. Managers use their sophisticated systems well to understand weaknesses and inform development plans. The highly specialist nature of the care they provide is at the centre of the planning and development for the homes.

Leaders work hard to overcome the challenges faced with recruitment. Agency staff are used effectively in supplementing the permanent staff team. There are clear plans to improve the staffing levels in the homes. Leaders have recently reviewed their workforce plan to improve recruitment and retention and have been creative in improving recruitment. The organisation now provides transport from local towns for staff to get to and from work. The home held its first staff awards event this year to celebrate staff's achievements.

In general, health and safety is well managed. Systems identify and resolve issues promptly. On occasion, these systems are not effective. On one occasion, a health and safety audit noted that a razor had not been stored safely. This information had not been shared with the managers to ensure that effective action was taken. Inspectors found that food was not stored safely, and a paddling pool was filled with debris. During the inspection, managers addressed these findings.

Plans for monitoring the children overnight are not detailed when staff use baby monitors to observe the children with specific health conditions. Their use is agreed with children's social workers and families. Although staff understand the agreed practice of their use, there is no policy outlining good practice.

Staff supervision sessions and appraisals do not take place at the frequency set out by the organisation. The quality of supervision is variable, and managers have identified this as an area for development. Staff, including agency staff, are well supported with high levels of training.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	31 August 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	14 July 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that good employment practice is maintained, as set out in regulations 31 to 33. They must ensure that information on references is discussed with applicants before confirming their employment to ensure that potential risks are minimised. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a written policy for the use of monitoring equipment in accordance with regulation 24 and Ofsted's published guidance 'Surveillance and monitoring in residential childcare settings'. ('Guide to

the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. The home must comply with relevant health and safety legislation, such as alarms and food hygiene. However, in doing so, it should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC069336

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Prior's Court Foundation

Responsible individual: Sarah Butcher

Registered managers: Matthew Phelps and Lisa Potheary

Inspectors

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

Lisa O'Donovan, Social Regulatory Inspection Manager

Jane Balfe, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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